

Decolonisation

The Emancipatory Potential of Recognising the Commonality of Marginalised People

It is difficult to constantly name and highlight discrimination and exploitation. At the same time, this is the only way to initiate processes of political organising, individual healing, collective struggles, community care and self-care. With a clear goal of transformation in mind, we are faced with the further and continuous breaking of dominant narratives. Both to be constantly loud, to name things and inequalities clearly and to be disruptive. And, to write.

This article will look at what we can learn from Black feminist movements to further pursue decolonisation processes and ultimately transform existing relations. Inspired by activists, artists, liberationists, authors and researchers such as bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Peggy Piesche, Natasha A. Kelly, Grada Kilomba, Belinda Kazeem-Kaminski, Noa Ha, Maureen Maisha Auma, Patricia Hill Collins, and Katharina Oguntoye, among others, some of the most important insights regarding the emancipatory potential of recognising the commonality of the marginalised, in terms of a form of decolonisation, are brought together here.

Community

Many authors mention community as a place characterised by shared experiences of racism, shared memories of (traumatic) colonial atrocities and as a place of knowledge and social critique (cf. Eggers and Mohamed, Hill Collins, Kelly, Kilomba, Piesche). Community building can be interpreted as a form of decolonisation and emancipatory because a typical pattern of colonial rule was to divide communities and territories. Community building, as exemplified by the ADEFRA generation as a site of social critique, is defined by Maisha Auma as a "politics of radical affinity" or being there for each other (cf. Eggers and Mohamed). This includes, for example, meetings of Black women*, autonomous Black (women's) spaces for hair workshops, women's health workshops or joint engagement with African artists (cf. Kraft 1995; Kraft and Ashraf-Khan 1994). In this context, the care work practised in the Black women's *community* is also mentioned by Auma as a model of cohesion of socio-critical Black women communities (cf. Eggers and Mohamed). This refers to a radical closeness. Community in this sense means that no member of the community is left alone with problems and obstacles, but that the community reacts with a radical closeness.

People inspire each other, comfort each other, stand by each other's side and support each other where possible. "Community" therefore also stands before wage labour and therefore also means a radical act against capitalism.

The Strategy of Speaking as an Act of Resistance

Following the perspective of Black women's communities, the use of speech as an act of resistance and a strategy of empowerment is discovered within social criticism, Black feminist literature (cf. Kazeem and Schaffer). In *Your Silence will not protect you* by Audre Lorde (2017), these strategies of empowerment, which is also understood as a *decolonisation strategy with bell hooks*, are discussed in more detail.

Diaspora models also focus on the formation and development of transnational communities, with more than one commonly perceived identity (cf. Ha). Shared experiences of discrimination and resistance, as well as common paths, are the focus here. (cf. Costa, Paul Gilroy) The example in Paul Gilroy's book, *The Black Atlantic* describes the notion of an Afro-diasporic community that continuously asserts itself as a resource-rich counterculture despite racist oppression (ibid.). Shared Black culture, in the form of music, as well as record shops as people's archives, radios, clubs and shared dance, are mentioned here as resources (cf. Gilroy).

The empirical basis of these findings are transnationally shared experiences (ibid.). Forms of resources are spaces of self-empowerment and exchange that have emerged, as well as connections and networks between different people and communities who have experienced discrimination. The historical conditionality is dealt with in-depth in the socio-critical book "Labor 89-Intersectional Movement Stories from West and East" by Peggy Piesche (cf. Piesche et al).

In response to German commemorative traditions, which have always been important moments of transformation in liberation and transnational independence movements, eight portraits of activists from Black or BIPOC, People of Colour, and queer feminist contexts are brought together (ibid.). In the context of collective memories, bearers of experiences of lived resistance are important resources for the next generations of communities of colour. Similarly, the work "*Schwarze Wurzeln*" (Black Roots) published by Oguntoye and Orlanda Frauenverlag, '*Schwarze Wurzeln Afro-deutsche Familiengeschichten von 1884 bis 1950*'. (Black Roots: Afro-German Family Stories from 1884 to 1950), on the living situation of people of African origin, reveals resources of communities of colour.

It makes clear that the history of Africans and Afro-Germans is linked to that of German colonialism (ibid.). In concrete terms, the book demonstrates the gaps in academic research regarding historical studies on the living situation of Africans and Afro-Germans. Even though this book deals specifically with the group of Black Germans and Afro-Germans, this research can be an important resource in the sense of archiving the history of Black Germans by making it possible to learn from the experiences of past generations and to take steps towards decolonisation.

Black Diaspora Meetings

Black feminist movements in the form of networking, exchange, initiatives, physical gatherings or on social media platforms, for example, Facebook groups, like the association ADEFRA[1] have had formative influences on Black German history. Their work facilitates transnational relationships with other Black feminists, lends itself (potentially) to mobilisation and helps expand their work (cf. Eggers and Mohamed).

In this context, Peggy Piesche speaks of a transnational diaspora [2], meaning networking and exchange of people who have been forcibly dispersed across countries and continents (cf. Piesche). Diaspora as a space of multiplicity is consistent with the intention of this study to interpret communities of colour as predominantly diverse and dispersed. Women in diaspora, for example, and their paradoxical use of cultural resources in terms of access to national civil societies, are an extremely complex issue and deserve closer examination, for which there is, unfortunately, no capacity in this article

Decolonisation and Empowerment

In the context of decolonisation, racism and empowerment should be thought of very closely together because empowerment can be seen as a resistance response to racism. This becomes even clearer if we first approach the roots of the empowerment movement in connection with decolonial theory. Decolonisation is to be understood as a lived political process anchored in everyday life, with the aim of "(...) defining ourselves in resistance to domination and beyond" (hooks 1994:13). This decolonial change of perspective opens up scope for action in the sense of the empowerment approach (developed by Patricia Hill Collins and bell hooks), a relevant perspective for the People of Colour movement in Germany.

Empowerment emerged and was ostensibly shaped as a demand of the black communities and the civil rights movement (cf. Kelly 2019: 12). However, the roots of this resulting movement, led by Malcolm X, Martin Luther King and others, go back even further, when people resisted in the occupied colonies and fought for independence (cf. Nassir-Shahniah 2013: 15). Through the common point of reference of experiences of racism, subordinations and worse positions among communities of colour can be overcome. This offers special potential for a counter-hegemonic movement that breaks through racist structures.

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